133
132
241
231
31
433
491
496
505
463
135
361

[For information on the topography, climate, agriculture and commercial crops, irrigation, stock raising, natural resources, production and supply, waterways, railways, and roads of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates between the plateau of Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf, discussed as one geographical unit, rather than by political boundary, see, M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 340-370.]

[For information on the topography, climate, agriculture, mineral wealth, railways, settlement pattern, productive capacity of the economy, and trade of the Levant coastland, see M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 371-414.]

[For information on the topography, occupations and relative productivity of the desert plateau, and of the Arabian Peninsula as a whole, see M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21:Fisher, pp. 427-449.]

000 162 eastwards into the desert. At present the bulk of the population is concentrated in a comparatively small part of the total area of the country; it is mainly in the West and in the river valleys of the Jazirah. The density of population is greatest on the coast and round Damascus and Aleppo.

241 The crops which are grown or could be grown vary greatly from district to district, in accordance with variations in climate and the soil's fertility. The Jazirah, the great plain of Homs and Hama, the Biqa' and the Hauran produce wheat, and to a lesser extent maize, barley and other cereals. Olives, vines and other fruits are grown on the coastal plains and the westward slopes of the coastal ranges; tobacco in Lebanon and around Latakia; cotton also around Latakia, and in the Biqa'. Some districts are well watered by springs, summer streams and perennial rivers, and some, in the north more than in the south and on the coast rather than inland, enjoy an adequate rainfall; but the fertility of almost all parts of the country could be much increased were its water-resources to be properly exploited. The Orontes in the north, the Litani in the south, the Euphrates and its tributaries in the north-east and other rivers could be used to irrigate perhaps half a million more hectares than are irrigated to-day. The rainfall could be more fully utilized, and the agricultural situation improved in various other ways, by systematic reafforestation, to make up for the bad effects of neglect in the past. Under French rule a little has been done to this end, but more remains to be done.

135 The mineral resources of Syria and Lebanon have not yet been thoroughly investigated but are probably not extensive. Salt and some other minerals exist in quantities sufficient to supply the country's own needs; but iron and other requisites of industry are found only in small quantities or else not at all. In recent years there have been reports of the discovery of oil in the Jazirah, but whatever oilfields exist are not yet being exploited.

433 241 In normal years the country's production of food equals and often exceeds its consumption, although the inadequacy of internal communications and other factors make necessary a certain importation of agricultural products from the neighbouring countries. Improvements in the quality of seeds and livestock and the modernization of agricultural methods have already begun, and greatly help in increasing production.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

Natural Resources

Land and water are undoubtedly the principal natural resources of Syria. Indications do not point to extensive mineral deposits. Some poor lignite but no coal has been found. A subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company carried out extensive prospecting and drilling over a considerable area under a concession granted in 1938. After spending about £ 6 million sterling in exploratory work, it surrendered its concession in August 1951. Although the belief persists in Syria that considerable oil will one day be discovered, there is no evidence to support the supposition. Drilling did reveal the presence of natural gas in eastern Syria, southwest of Hassetche, and also of appreciable quantities of rock salt. In theory this gas, if proved in considerable volume, together with salt, could provide the raw materials for the production of fertilizers and alkalis, but other countries—for example Iraq—may well be more favorably situated with respect to the development of similar resources. The natural gas could also be used as a source of energy but it is unfortunately found at a considerable distance from the potential market in western Syria.

There are important deposits of bitumen or asphalt. One of these, in the province of Latakia, is already being mined, but other and far richer deposits uncovered in the Djebel Bichri, west of Deir ez Zor, are being exploited to a minor extent only by the Ministry of Public Works. The latter deposits are expected to assume considerable importance in the extensive roadbuilding program the government is planning to undertake. Iron ore, chromite and lead and iron pyrites are known to exist, but their presence in commercial quantities is still to be proved. While licenses for prospecting of minerals are being issued, on the basis of existing evidence it seems unlikely that mineral resources exist in sufficient quantities to affect the future of Syria significantly.

Agriculture

Syria is predominantly an agricultural country. Between 65% to 75% of the people derive their living directly from agriculture, and a considerable portion of the balance earn their livelihood by handling or processing agricultural commodities. Agriculture and animal husbandry together probably account for 45% to 50% of the national income. In agriculture, winter crops are most important because rainfall is concen-

874 conducts an experimental farm, and co-operates with the government in a comprehensive educational program.

489 Syria produces a variety of items for export, the principal products being cereals, textiles, vegetables, cotton and wool and
135 hides. It is relatively poor in mineral resources, although rich deposits of asphalt exist in the Nusairiyeh range and salt basins in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus provinces.
471 Explorations for oil have been made in the northeast under a concession acquired in 1940 by the Syrian Petroleum Company, an affiliate of the Iraq Petroleum group.
315 After several years of unsuccessful borings,
651 the concession was relinquished, but the country derives some income from pipelines which traverse it, leading from the oil fields in Iraq and Saudi Arabia to Syrian and
433 Lebanese ports. Industrial development is slowly emerging from the handicraft stage, and numerous modern plants for the processing of local materials have been established, primarily in Damascus and Aleppo. They include the manufacture of textiles, soaps and oils, cigarettes, various food products, shoes, cement and other consumer goods. The promotion of industry is handicapped, however, by the shortage of raw materials, labor and cheap sources of power.

491 The cities and the towns of western Syria are linked with each other and with the adjoining territories by a system of motor roads. Communications in the interior are poor, and consist in many areas of tracks
505 across the desert. There are no navigable rivers. Latakia, the chief port, is small, and steamer traffic with the Mediterranean countries is at present conducted largely through Beirut and Tripoli, in Lebanon. The construction of modern port facilities at Latakia is scheduled, however, for 1953.
315 Banias has been developed as the terminal
505 of the new pipeline from the Kirkuk oil fields of the Iraq Petroleum Company to the Mediterranean. It was completed in
496 1952. Aleppo is connected by railways with both Beirut and Tripoli, and is an important junction on the trunk line from Istan-

744 the refuse dumps and other breeding sites
136 are sprayed with DDT preparations at in-
511 tervals between May and October.

136 LICE. Infestation with lice is common
671 among the inhabitants in the congested
361 quarters of the towns and in the villages and the Bedouin encampments. *Pediculus humanus corporis* is important as the vector of typhus fever; cases are reported almost annually. *P. humanus capitis* and *Phthirus pubis* are somewhat less frequent.

136 FLEAS. Numerous species of fleas para-
164 sitize the wild and the domestic rodents. The rat flea, *Xenopsylla cheopis*, is prevalent: it is the vector in sporadic cases of murine typhus, and in past decades it was implicated in the transmission of plague. The human flea, *Pulex irritans*, and the cat and the dog fleas, *Ctenocephalides felis* and *C. canis*, are widely distributed. The stick-tight flea, *Echidnophaga gallinacea*, sometimes attacks man, but it is of no known medical significance.

136 BEDBUGS. *Cimex lectularius* is an annoying pest in all parts of the country.

136 TICKS AND MITES. A variety of ticks,
232 including *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* and
164 several species of *Hyalomma*, infest the livestock. *Ornithodorus tholozani* is found in the rural areas, where it is the local vector of tick-borne relapsing fever.

136 The grain itch mite, *Pediculoides ventri-*
164 *cosus*, is plentiful in the grain-producing regions. It frequently attacks man, causing a painful rash. The human itch mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, is widely distributed, but it is decreasing steadily in prevalence.

136 SCORPIONS AND SPIDERS. Several species of
752 scorpions are present, including *Buthus quinquestriatus*, *B. judaicus*, *B. crassicauda* and *B. europeus*, and *Scorpio maurus propinquus* and *S. maurus fucus*. Serious systemic effects resulting from scorpion stings
[135] are rare, but deaths are sometimes recorded among young children, usually after attacks by *B. quinquestriatus*.

136 The poisonous black spider, *Latrodectus tredecimguttatus*, is found in some localities.

p. 144(B)

Reptiles. Venomous snakes are not common, but at least 4 species of vipers are known to be present. The carpet viper, *Echis carinatus*, exists only in the north, while *Vipera lebetina lebetina*, *V. lebetina xanthina* and *V. palaestina* are reported from many parts of the country. 136

Rodents. Rats and mice are numerous. The usual domestic rats are *Rattus rattus rattus* or *R. rattus alexandrinus*. *R. norvegicus* sometimes invades the port towns of Latakia.

Molluscs.* The fresh-water snail, *Bulinus truncatus* (— *B. contortus*), inhabits some of the tributaries of the Belikh and the Khabour rivers, near the Turkish border. It is the intermediate host of *Schistosoma haematobium*, which is reported from several foci in that region. 136 164

Plants. Various trees, weeds and grasses are capable of inducing allergic manifestations in susceptible individuals, but no precise information is available. 137 752

The broad bean, *Vicia faba*, which is grown extensively as a food, may be toxic to young children when it is eaten raw. A few deaths are observed each year, among children in both urban and rural communities. Occasional cases of lathyrism occur when the "Indian pea," *Lathyrus sativus*, a plant widely cultivated for fodder, is used for human consumption. [135]

Food Sanitation

Municipal regulations govern the sanitation of the food supplies in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Latakia. Restaurants, markets and other premises where food is sold are inspected at regular intervals by the municipal sanitary officers, and food handlers are required to register for examination at 6-month intervals. Municipal slaughterhouses are established in towns with populations of 20,000 and over, and are operated under the supervision of the health authorities. The meat animals are inspected before and after slaughter by veterinary officers of the Min- 744

* See footnote, page 10.

p. 146(A)